Chapter 2: Developing an Interpretive Infrastructure

The mission of the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved (AQE) and the themes, goals, and objectives that support it collectively form the site’s interpretive infrastructure. This infrastructure defines the reasons the site exists and has historical significance. One aim of the interpretive master planning process for AQE is to create that interpretive infrastructure through the interpretive planning process. Chapter 2 of this Interpretive Master Plan (IMP) provides the results of that process.

In this IMP, the mission is the overall statement of interpretive purpose. It drives both the interpretive program and the use of historic physical resources. Themes provide a path through available historical information that site staff uses to create interpretive programs. Goals drive further interpretive development. Objectives are tangible actions that implement the goals. Together mission, themes, goals, and objectives support the public face of AQE and its staff and volunteers in their efforts: 1) to increase visibility for the site in its local and regional communities; and 2) to develop its public programs.

The materials for this chapter were developed at meetings with Loudoun Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) staff, members of the Friends of the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved (FOASQ), and community stakeholders at two site visits and one stakeholders meeting, held in Loudoun County, VA. The site visits took place September 13-14, 2017 and, February 2, 2018; the stakeholders meeting was held on February 3, 2018.

2.1 Statement of Significance
AQE has significance in three areas: Slavery in Northern Virginia; African American Heritage, Loudoun County, VA; and Virginia Vernacular Architecture.

2.1.1 Slavery in Northern Virginia
The location of the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved represents the junction of rural and urban slavery found in Northern Virginia. Its proximity to Leesburg and Alexandria, and to the non-slaveholding Quaker community in Loudoun County, shows that the enslaved population of Loudoun County lived in a complex environment influenced by regional and national tensions.
2.1.2 African American Heritage/ Loudoun County, Virginia

Loudoun County has a significant African American history, exemplified by the accomplishments of the enslaved, those who were freed, free people of color, their descendants, and other African Americans who have settled there since Emancipation.

2.1.3 Virginia Vernacular Architecture

The Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved (AQE) is a rare surviving example of its type and reflects a unique type of improved housing for the enslaved. The stone duplex, or double quarters, constructed c. 1813 and c. 1845, is a substantial building that reflects a large investment in materials often associated with a large estate. Quarters for the enslaved constructed during the early nineteenth century in Loudoun County were typically built as log cabins with dirt floors, few windows, and wood-and-mud chimneys.\(^1\) As noted in the 2008 National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination for AQE\(^2\), relatively few quarters for enslaved people were of stone construction. Those constructed of stone were typically located close to the main plantation house and reflected vernacular stone building techniques.

The 2008 NRHP nomination notes that the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved closely resembles the design and masonry techniques of small stone dwellings constructed by area farmers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

“Masons raised most Loudoun Valley stone homes by laying field stones (rubble stones) on one another — not in distinct courses— in a bed of clay, then pointed the exterior with lime mortar…. They plastered interior walls on the main floor, and whitewashed cellar and loft walls.” A number of these stone structures were one- or two-story, side-gable, two-room plans with no central hall and no architectural ornamentation.\(^3\)

Although the building conveys elements of Virginian vernacular architecture on the exterior, the interior features a simpler and cruder design of living spaces with earthen floors (except for the wooden floors above the basement), basic fireplaces and chimneys, small, ground-floor rooms with garret spaces above, and minimal natural lighting. Therefore, while the exterior of the AQE represents elements common to the vernacular building traditions of nineteenth-century Loudoun County, the interior reflects the rudimentary living spaces of quarters for the enslaved of this region during this same period. With the Quarters for the Enslaved so close to the

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\(^{3}\) Ibid. p. 7.
Farmhouse and the road, John Lewis may have chosen a stone exterior to present a unified exterior for his plantation buildings.

2.2 Mission Statement
The mission statement of the AQE site must fall under the under outcome-based community services and stewardship aspects of the Loudoun Parks, Recreation and Community Services Mission Statement:

*Our mission is to provide outstanding recreational and leisure activities, outcome-focused community services and stewardship of our natural resources to promote quality of life for Loudoun’s residents and visitors.*

This report recommends the mission statement below specifically for the Arcola site:

*To preserve Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved for future generations and to educate the public about the rich African American heritage in Loudoun County, Virginia.*

2.3 Subthemes and Storylines, Goals and Objectives

2.3.1 Subthemes and Storylines
To help AQE fulfill its mission, create new interpretive messages, and bring to life the story of the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved, the HBTS team developed a main theme (African-American Heritage in Loudoun County, Virginia) and three subthemes (Community, Plantation Operations, and Architecture and Preservation) that, together with their individual interpretive storylines and components, form the Main Storyline.

2.3.1.1 Family and Community
The purpose of the Community theme is to explain and explore the daily lives of the enslaved at Arcola: their institutions, work, daily activities, cultural practices and other aspects of their lives as individuals caught up in the institution of slavery. Storylines supporting the Community theme appear below and are summarized in Table 2a.

- Religion
- Domestic Life
- Family
- Work
### 2.3.1.2 Architecture and Preservation

The purpose of the *Architecture and Preservation* theme is to explain the evolution and architectural significance of the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved as a rare example of a surviving intact stone quarters for the enslaved. Storylines supporting the *Architecture and Preservation* theme are as follows and are summarized in Table 2.3b:

- Evolution of the AQE
- Preservation of Buildings Associated with the Enslaved
- Vernacular Architecture

#### Table 2.3b - Architecture and Preservation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storyline</th>
<th>Evolution/ AQE</th>
<th>Preservation/ Buildings of Enslaved</th>
<th>Vernacular Architecture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Components</td>
<td>1813/AQE Part 1</td>
<td>AQE History</td>
<td>Quarters for the Enslaved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1845/ AQE Part 2</td>
<td>Techniques</td>
<td>Dependencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20th Century use</td>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Role of Vernacular Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Location/Design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.3.1.3 Plantation Operations

The Plantation Operations theme examines the plantation system and its economic context, which developed, supported and maintained the institution of slavery in Northern Virginia. Storylines...
supporting the *Plantation Operations* theme include the following and are summarized in Table 2c:

- Business of Slavery
- Agriculture
- Consumer Economy

**Table 2.3c**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storyline</th>
<th>Business of Slavery</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Consumer Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Components</strong></td>
<td>Fluidity</td>
<td>Tobacco to Grain Economy</td>
<td>Buying/ Selling</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Selling South</td>
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<td>Dairy</td>
<td>Production by Enslaved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring the Enslaved</td>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enslaved/Free Dynamic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.3.2 Interpretive Goals

Interpretive goals are generalized statements that provide parameters for further interpretive development. This plan recommends a series of interpretive goals for AQE based on the interpretive planning team’s meetings and other interactions with PRCS staff members and community stakeholders.

- Establish broad-based visitation at AQE.
- Establish public programming/historic programs.
- Focus the period of interpretation.
- Establish a body of historical research to support period of interpretation.
- Develop a feasible school program.
- Offer technology-based programs.
- Establish an exhibit space/program.
- Develop local and regional partnerships and outreach.
- Expand Friends of AQE volunteer program and activities.
- Develop in-house staff to evolve the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved and other historic sites in Loudoun County.

### 2.3.3 Interpretive Objectives
Interpretive objectives are statements of desired visitor experiences. They describe how the site’s interpretation and educational programs facilitate intellectual, educational, and physical experiences for visitors. These statements identify what visitors to the site will learn, feel, and do or experience. Visitors come to historic sites seeking something of value. Each visitor defines what that value is for him/her. Visitor objectives set forth the experiences and opportunities available to the average visitor on an average day, whether the visitor chooses to experience them or not.

2.3.3.1 Learning Objectives
Learning objectives are widely used at museums and historic sites; they focus on visitors being able to name, describe and/or explain desired items upon completion of a program or services, or upon leaving the site. Learning objectives for AQE are as follows:

L1. Visitors will be able to conceptually state at least one of the main interpretive themes of the site after interacting with interpretive programs offered during their visit.

L2. Visitors will understand that the context and character of the site has changed over time.

L3. Visitors will be able to identify the important role enslaved persons played, and the social and cultural contributions they made, in the development of Loudoun County and Northern Virginia.

L4. Visitors will be able to acknowledge that the consequences of slavery continue today in American cultural and social attitudes towards race and discrimination.

L5. Visitors will recognize the architectural significance of the Arcola Quarters for the Enslaved.

L6. Visitors will understand the importance of preserving AQE and other buildings where the enslaved lived and worked.

2.3.3.2 Behavioral Objectives.
Behavioral objectives help focus on what the site wants visitors to do while at AQE and how they use the information offered to them. These objectives are the “pay-off” objectives and are the result of interpretive programs and services. Behavioral objectives for AQE are as follows:

B1. Visitors will treat all historic and cultural sites with a sense of respect and stewardship and appreciate the value of such sites in understanding the past.

B2. Visitors will take a greater interest in African American history. Visitors will want to learn more about the evolution of slavery and its aftermath.

B3. Visitors will understand the role of enslaved persons in the development of the Lewis Farm and other Loudoun County farms and plantations.
B4. Visitors will want to learn more about vernacular architecture and enslaved-related structures.

2.3.3.3 Emotional Objectives

Emotional objectives help visitors remember interpretive topics because of the strong feeling they create in visitors. Interpretive themes are instrumental in helping to accomplish the emotional objectives, which help visitors feel surprise, anger, sadness, acceptance, and other desired emotions related to the interpretive themes and elements. Emotional objectives for AQE are as follows:

E1. Visitors will want to visit more historic sites and museums in the region and in the state to increase their understanding of history.

E2. Visitors will feel a connection with the enslaved population of Loudoun County and beyond.

E3. Visitors will be inspired by cultural and social accomplishments of the enslaved in Loudoun County.

E4. Visitors will appreciate the AQE as a rare surviving example of an early 19th-century stone quarters for the enslaved in Virginia.

E5. Visitors will sense the moral legacy of slavery, its continued cultural presence in American society, and its impact on African American and other visitors.